

MARCHES

John Philip Sousa

FAIREST OF THE FAIR
 MANHATTAN BEACH
 BLACK HORSE TROOP
 DAUGHTERS OF TEXAS

RIFLE REGIMENT
 CORCORAN CADETS
 HANDS ACROSS THE SEA
 SEMPER FIDELIS

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

PIECES OF EIGHT *Joseph Jenkins—Jerome Neff*
 MARCH CARILLON, OP. 19, NO. 2 *Howard Hanson*
 CHEERIO *Edwin Franko Goldman*
 HIS HONOR *Henry Fillmore*
 OUR DIRECTOR *F. E. Bigelow*

GLORY OF THE GRIDIRON *Harry Alford*

PRIDE OF THE ILLINI *Karl L. King*
 NATIONAL EMBLEM *E. E. Bagley*

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*FREDERICK FENNELLS conducting the
 EASTMAN SYMPHONIC WIND ENSEMBLE*

IN its first Mercury "Living Presence" release (American Concert Band Masterpieces—MG50079), the brilliant conductor of the Eastman Symphonic Wind Ensemble, Frederick Fennell demonstrated in magnificent fashion the capacity of the band as a vehicle for original symphonic composition.

With this, its second long playing disc, Mercury takes pride in presenting a series of definitive performances of the kind of music all of us have associated with the band since childhood—a widely varied selection of marches—headed, of course, by eight masterpieces from the pen of America's own "March King", John Philip Sousa—this as a tribute during the centennial year of Sousa's birth.

That there are many types of marches, even within the essentially military genre cultivated by Sousa, will be self-evident from a playing of this record. Naturally, we are all of us well aware of the broad differences existing between ceremonial marches of the kind used for solemn occasions (many of which occur in opera, by the way) and the regular military march. The symphonic march, such as Tchaikovsky's *March Slav*, can also in a sense be included in this ceremonial march category. With the possible exception of Howard Hanson's *March Carillon*, all of the selections on this disc are written for actual marching purposes—and yet you will be surprised at the enormous variety of pacing and color that distinguishes each of these marches from the others.

When it comes to giving an utterly compelling rhythmic pulse to the onward progress of a regiment or other marching group, together with a wonderful upsurge of lyrical song, John Philip Sousa (1854-1932) remains unparalleled and incomparable. Sousa was in truth the last of that great line of masters of music in the lighter vein which included the Strausses of Vienna, Offenbach and Waldteufel in Paris, Gilbert and Sullivan in London and Hans Christian Lumbye in Copenhagen. With Johann Strauss the younger, Vienna's "Waltz King", John Philip Sousa has one all-important quality in common—his music does not merely invite movement of the feet and the body, it commands it—and irresistibly so!

Born November 6, 1854 in Washington, D. C. of a Spanish father and German mother, Sousa received all his musical training in this country. From the age of 16 he was wielding the baton in various variety theaters and during 1876-7, he played under Jacques Offenbach, when that renowned operetta composer visited the U. S. A.

At the time Sousa was named in 1880 to head the United States Marine Band in Washington, the status not only of that organization but of bands throughout the nation was very poor indeed. By the time Sousa resigned his commission in 1892 to establish his own celebrated band, he had earned himself the soubriquet of "March King" and had singlehandedly, by example and precept, laid the groundwork for the band and the band repertoire as a permanent factor in American social and cultural life.

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are the equal of these, if not their peer—hence the inclusion here of the richly melodic and colorfully scored *Fairest of the Fair*, the bright and circusy *Manhattan Beach* (named for the shore resort where Sousa and his band so often played), the two fine cavalry marches *Daughters of Texas* and the *Black Horse Troop* (the latter written for Troop A of the Cleveland Mounted Police), and the wonderfully aristocratic *Corcoran Cadets* (composed for the group bearing the name of that socially prominent Washington, D. C. family and titled in full *The March-Past of the Corcoran Cadets*).

While it is true that no composer of marches in America has matched the consistent level of inspiration achieved by John Philip Sousa throughout his whole output, there have been many superb pieces of this kind written both before and since Sousa's day. Needless to say, not all have been of military or patriotic inspiration like Samuel Barber's *Commando March* (Mercury MG50079). *Pieces of Eight* was written a few years ago by two Eastman School students as a joke—and a brilliantly clever one at that; for it is based wholly on themes from Beethoven's Symphony No. 8 in F. It also happens to be a first-rate march in its own right, with plenty of swing and calling for a virtuoso body of players. *March Carillon* by Eastman School Director Howard Hanson is a virtual march tone-poem, inspired by memories of the church bells heard in his boyhood town of Wahoo, Nebraska. Edwin Franko Goldman, beloved leader of the band bearing his name, is perhaps the closest we have had to a latter-day Sousa, for scores of his marches (such as *On the Mall**) have long been classics of the repertoire. *Cheerio*, written as a sequel to *On the Mall*, makes delightful use of the whistling device which made its predecessor so popular, plus a few added trimmings which you will hear for yourself. Henry Fillmore was one of the most brilliant circus bandmasters of his day and was also conductor of the Municipal Band of Cincinnati. *His Honor*, dedicated to the Mayor of that city, is a brilliant essay in the best circus band manner.

A classic march genre of the post-Sousa era has been the collegiate band march which has become a fixture of football games the length and breadth of the nation. Although E. E. Bigelow's *Our Director* was never written with scholastic athletic games in mind, it is this familiar piece which has served as the prototype of many collegiate marches and which has itself—with lyrics varied for each individual purpose—served many a high school nobly as its football song.

The growth of big-time college football, together with the increasingly elaborateness of the spectacles staged between the halves of games between major colleges, stimulated a tremendous expansion of collegiate and high school marching bands everywhere; and in the course of this expansion, the quality of performance, choice of repertoire, and precision of drill and figure marching rose to quite unbelievable heights of virtuosity. It was the University of Illinois Band, in company with the University of Michigan and Harvard University, which stood among the pioneers and leaders in this expansion of the collegiate band movement. Harry Alford's *Glory of the Gridiron* and Karl King's *Pride of the Illini*—both written for the University of Illinois Band—are both brilliantly representative of the flamboyant collegiate football march that accompanies the "big games" of today.

The name of E. E. Bagley remains something of a mystery, even to those versed in military band lore. However, the fact that his march *National Emblem* has been ascribed on countless occasions to the pen of John Philip Sousa speaks for the true genius which shines forth in its pages. Without question it stands with Sousa's own *Stars and Stripes Forever** and *Semper Parvulus* as the most truly representative of all America's patriotic military marches.

A native of Cleveland, Ohio, Frederick Fennell is a graduate of the Eastman School of Music. Since 1939 he has been on the Eastman School conducting faculty, save for a brief period during World War Two when he was National U.S.O. Music Advisor. Fennell's work in the wind ensemble and band field began in earnest during his very first year as a student at Eastman, when he took the marching band he had organized at the University of Rochester and persuaded Dr. Hanson to let him transform it into the Eastman School Symphony Band. The years of work with the Symphony Band resulted in Fennell's becoming one of the nation's foremost experts in band and wind music and a conductor whose services have been sought everywhere.

The founding of the Eastman Wind Ensemble arose from a need, from Mr. Fennell's point of view, for an instrumental group of virtuoso caliber which could be called upon to play every type of music written for wind instruments from the chamber wind serenades of Mozart to the massed sonorities of a full band.

Mr. Fennell has expressed his aims for the Eastman Wind Ensemble in a letter directed to composers throughout the United States "I submit this widely diversified grouping of wind-brass sonorities to you as a medium which I hope will be attractive enough to interest you as a composer. While the outlines of the contemporary wind band are obvious in the instrumentation, I trust you will be so objective as to lay aside whatever 'unpleasant' connotations the term 'band' may bring to your mind. It is my earnest hope that you will consider this a wind-brass-percussion sonority resource which will afford you a far from limited instrumental palette worthy of your consideration."

Other Mercury LIVING PRESENCE recordings by Frederick Fennell and the Eastman Wind Ensemble:

AMERICAN CONCERT BAND MASTERPIECES by Persichetti, Gould, Schuman, Bennett, Piston, Barber. MG50079

REED La Fiesta Mexicana; MENNIN Canzona; PERSICHIETTI Psalm; THOMSON A Solemn Music; HANSON Chorale and Alleluia. MG50084



This MERCURY LONG PLAYING recording was made possible through the use of MARGIN CONTROL—a technique whereby it has become possible for Mercury to produce for the record-buying public a disc of truly superior quality, especially with respect to brilliance, clarity, dynamic range and reliable stylus tracking. This record can be played on any